Gc
929.2
W67113s
1727515

M. L.

REYNOLDS HISTORICAL
GENEALOGY COLLECTION

Gc

ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 1833 01433 9904

Memoirs of a Nonagenarian

John William Soady

[illegible]

MEMOIRS OF A NONAGENARIAN

Some Links with the Charleston of Colonial Days through the Williams-Roper Families.

COMPILED BY
JOHN WILLIAM SOADY
1940

RICHMOND, VA.:
THE DIETZ PRESS, *Publishers*
1940

1727515

Copyright, 1940
by
John William Soady
shreveport, la.

Printed in the United States of America.

M.1246

FOREWORD

These Memoirs of the Williams-Roper families form a part of a cross section of the Colonial life of the Province of South Carolina, of the persecutions suffered by the Tories for their loyalty to the country of their birth, and of their final banishment.

I have always had a mild interest in Charleston, knowing that my grandmother, Grace Amelia Williams, was born there. I had thought that at some future time I might make a visit to that City. The opportunity presented itself when my good friend, David H. Deas, a prominent Charlestonian, asked me to go with him for a two weeks' visit. So we went there in the Spring of 1923, and were most royally entertained by his relatives and friends, among them Mrs. Mary A. Wragg, who lived with her sister, Miss Evelyn Roper on Legare Street. Mrs. Wragg gave me a warm welcome and a dinner in my honor. She had a vast amount of information to give me, and of my relationship to her. In looking over her genealogical tree she showed me that her great grandfather and my great grandmother were brother and sister.

I met also the Honorable Joseph W. Barnwell, the President of the S. C. Historical Society, who volun-

teered to assist me in my researches. He said he was related to the Hext family, and laughingly, called me his cousin, "once removed."

I am much indebted to my relative Mrs. Wragg, who sent me the manuscript written by the grandson of William Roper, Richard Dart Roper, to his nephew, Mrs. Wragg's father, Richard Roper, dated Nov. 16th, 1852, and given to me by her to use in my records.

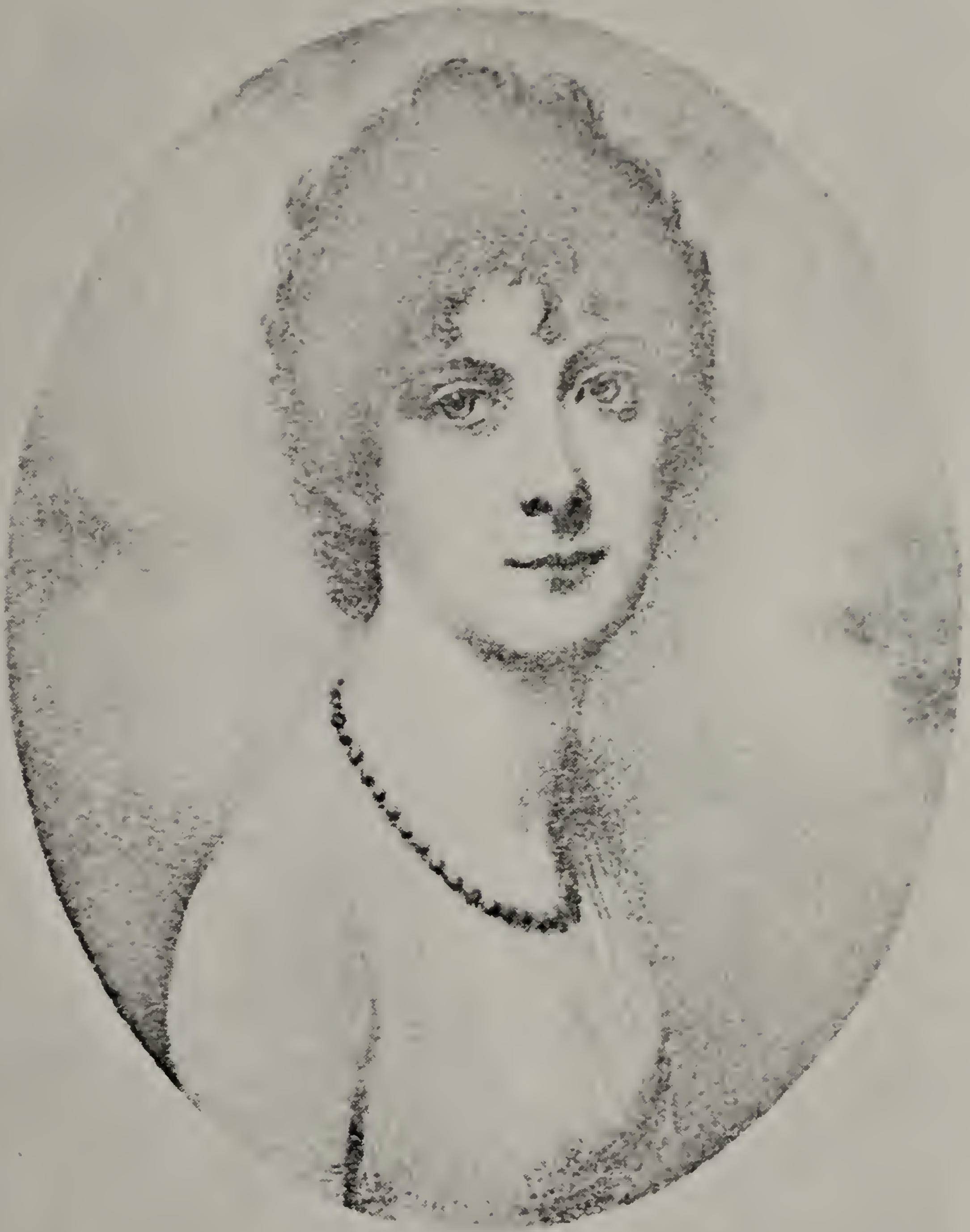
I left Charleston and the lovely country surrounding it with great enthusiasm, and it has finally culminated in my undertaking to commit to writing the main facts of interest relative to my ancestors on this side of the Atlantic. It will be of interest mainly to the descendants of the two families recorded herein.

JOHN WILLIAM SOADY.

Shreveport, La.,
September, 1940.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

John William Soady (*Frontispiece*)
Grace Amelia Soady (1777-1853) . . . . . facing page 7
Robert Williams Soady . . . . " " 9
Robert Williams' Residence . . . . " " 13
John Soady . . . . " " 15
Grace Amelia Soady . . . . " " 17
Robert Williams Soady (Barrister) . . . . " " 19
William Roper . . . . " " 21
Benjamin Dart Roper . . . . " " 23
Richard Roper . . . . " " 25
Sir Thomas More . . . . " " 27
Roper Hospital . . . . " " 31



Grace Amelia Soudy.
(née Williams)
1777-1853.

MEMOIRS OF A NONAGENARIAN

THE families of Williams and Roper are closely intertwined; in fact, these chronicles will show that the respective grandfathers of Grace Amelia Williams were the first Williams and the first Roper to come to the Province of Carolina.

Robert Williams came to the Province in 1737 from Edwinsford, Llandilo, South Wales with his wife, Margaret and two young children, Mary and Robert Williams, Jr.; Mary was born in 1726 and Robert Williams in 1732.

The Williams Estate had been in the possession of the family from early years. At the time of the birth of Robert Williams, Jr. the Manor at Edwinsford was occupied by Sir Nicholas Williams, baronet, M. P. Lord Lieutenant of Carmarthanshire; he died in 1745. Robert Williams, Jr. was a scion of the family.

According to the South Carolina Historical Society, Robert Williams settled in Beaufort, S. C. In St. Helena's Parish, Beaufort County appears the following: Robert Williams purchased in 1739, 1,300 acres of land, and a number of purchases of land in the

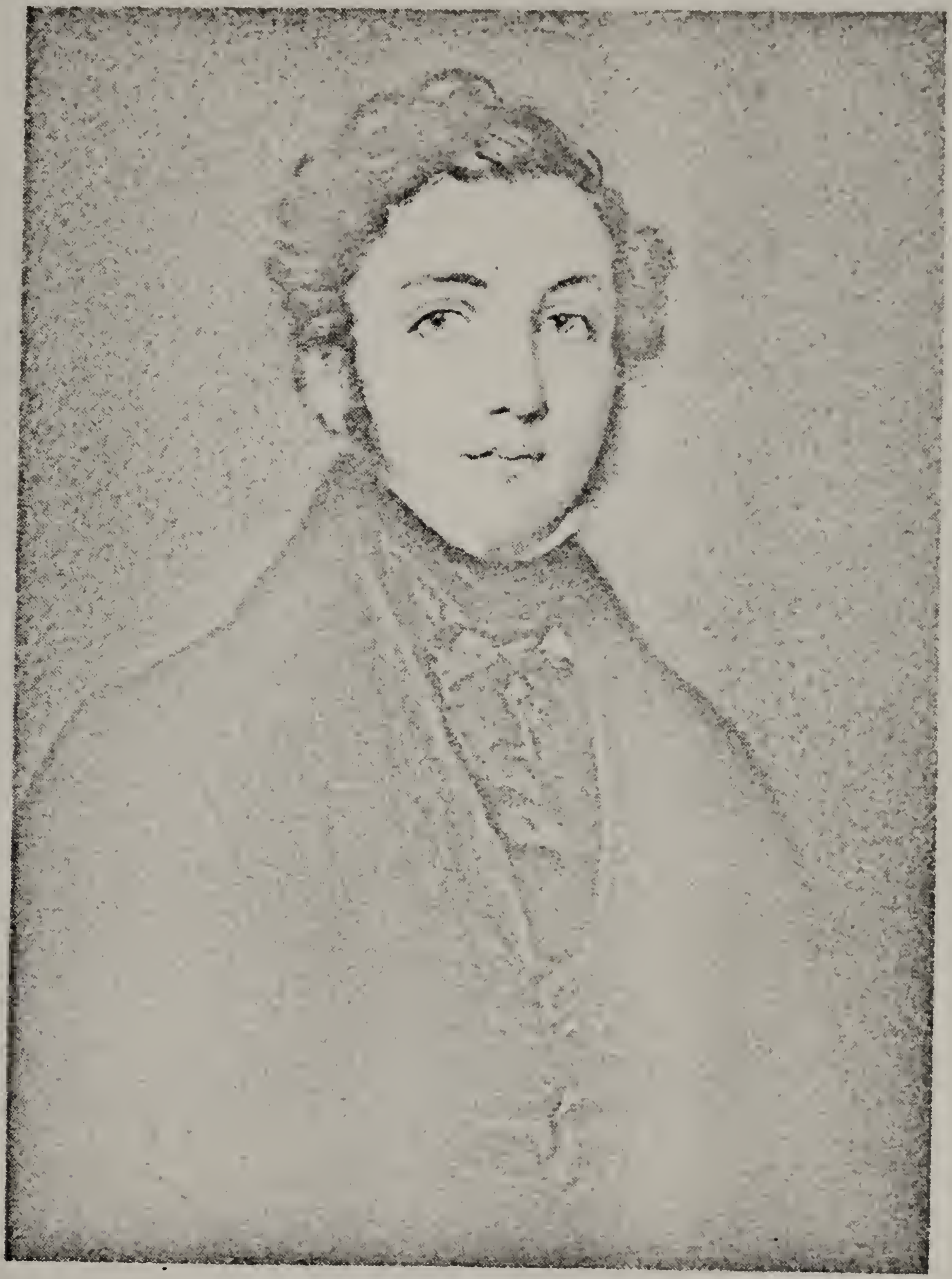
forties, hence he must have had considerable means.

He married three times. No date is given of the death of his wife, Margaret, but among the press notices is mentioned: Robert Williams, Sr. married May 5th, 1759, Ann Gibbes, widow, of Christ Church Parish. We have no record of her death, but inasmuch as I have a salver, engraved with R/M intertwined, and hall marked 1765, he must have married Margaret Hartley, his third wife, prior to that date. In his will, dated October 3rd, 1771, he leaves his property to his wife, Margaret, (a widow of considerable means) hence all the property acquired from her was left to her Hartley relatives. His will also provided for his daughter, Mary, who was married to James Edward Powell of Savannah, Ga. in 1746. Their son, Robert Williams Powell, was baptized February 16, 1747.

The *South Carolina Historical and Geneological Magazine* prints the following: Robert Williams, Senior and Robert Williams, Junior were enrolled as Justices of the Peace for 1756.

Robert Williams, Senior died in July 1776. His vault is in St. Philip's churchyard, Charleston.

Robert Williams, Junior, was born in Edwinsford, South Wales, in 1732. He married Elizabeth Hext on January 1st, 1755, by whom he had five children: Sarah, born 1755; Robert, 1756; Margaret (Peggy), 1757 (she married Hext Prioleau in 1775); Mary and Elizabeth Grace. His wife died November 10th, 1769.



Robert Williams Loady.
of Lincoln's Inn.
1813 - 1857.

In 1771, on his return from England, he married Ann Roper, the daughter of William and Grace Roper, by whom he had four children: Martha, William, Grace Amelia and Ann. In May 1777 he left for Holland, leaving behind his wife and eight children, the eldest son being already in England. He returned to Charleston under a flag of truce in October 1778. As the Colonial Government threatened to confiscate the estates of absentees he took the oath of allegiance to avoid confiscation. On account of his Royalist sentiments he was finally banished by order of the Colonial Government of South Carolina on February 28th, 1782. Robert Williams left with his family for England in January 1783 on a vessel bound for Nassau, N. P. Mr. Williams had large landed estates which were confiscated; he had also large sums of money, loaned at interest to private parties, amounting to over twenty thousand pounds sterling. The Council of South Carolina passed a law that all monies loaned by Royalists could be liquidated in Colonial script, worth ten cents on the dollar. The British Government made a partial compensation, but only for loss of property, notwithstanding its promise to pay full indemnity. Robert Williams made repeated efforts to have his claims adjusted amounting to over twenty-five thousand pounds sterling, but without success. On February 5th, 1805 the British Government Board resolved to refuse payment of claims where parties had taken the oath of allegiance to the United States. Mr. Williams' brother-

in-law, Col. Roper, was subsequently informed that the British Government granted him ten thousand pounds, and after his death a further sum was granted, sufficient for the support and maintenance of his widow, and to educate the younger children, and their support while they were under the age of twenty-one.

As an indication of the position Robert Williams occupied in the community the following citations are of record:

> "The appointment by Colonel Nisbet Balfour, Commandant at Charles Town of Robert Williams Junior, Gent. Second Lieutenant of a Company in the first battalion of the Charles Town Regiment of Militia, dated 21st August, 1780."

> "The appointment by Nisbet Balfour Esquire, Commandant of Charles Town of Robert Williams Junior Esquire to be Captain of a Company in the Charles Town Regiment of Militia commanded by Robert William Powell, dated 12th March, 1781."

In the New York Public Library I found manuscript books presented by the British Government to the United States, being transcripts of American Loyalists to the Crown. In the Public Record, Vol. 55, page 44, is a petitioner, Robert Williams *et. al.,* dated March 1784, seeking indemnification from the Government. In Vol. 56, a petition from Robert Williams, the younger, the son of Robert Williams, Junior. I copied the manuscript about as follows: "Went with his father to England in 1770, completed the classical part of his education at Westminster School and entered Lincolns

Inn, where he studied and kept commons until 1778; his father, being unable to support him longer, he returned with him to South Carolina, where he completed his clerkship."

Robert Williams, the younger, born in South Carolina, was appointed a Public Notary on 12th March, 1778.

Robert Williams, Junior, died on 28th March, 1808, at the age of 76. In his last will and testament "Robert Williams, formerly of Charleston, South Carolina, Councellor at Law, now of London, dated 6th September, 1802," names his wife, Ann Williams, and the following children as Legatees: Robert Williams, Sarah Williams, Elizabeth Williams, Martha Roper Williams, William Roper Williams, Grace Amelia Williams, Ann Hamilton Williams, George Parker Williams, David Edward Williams, Thomas Bull Williams, Cornelius James Williams, Margaret Jones.* The children all survived him.

Robert Williams, designated as the younger, was the acting executor of the estate of his father, and also of his step-mother, Ann Roper Williams. He died on the 27th November, 1833; Sarah in 1839 and Elizabeth Grace in 1840. Margaret remained in Charleston when the family left for England. After the death of her husband, Hext Prioleau she married a Mr. Jones, by

---

*The Margaret Jones, named in the Will was the widow of Hext Prioleau. She had two sons and two daughters by this second marriage, all residents of Charleston.

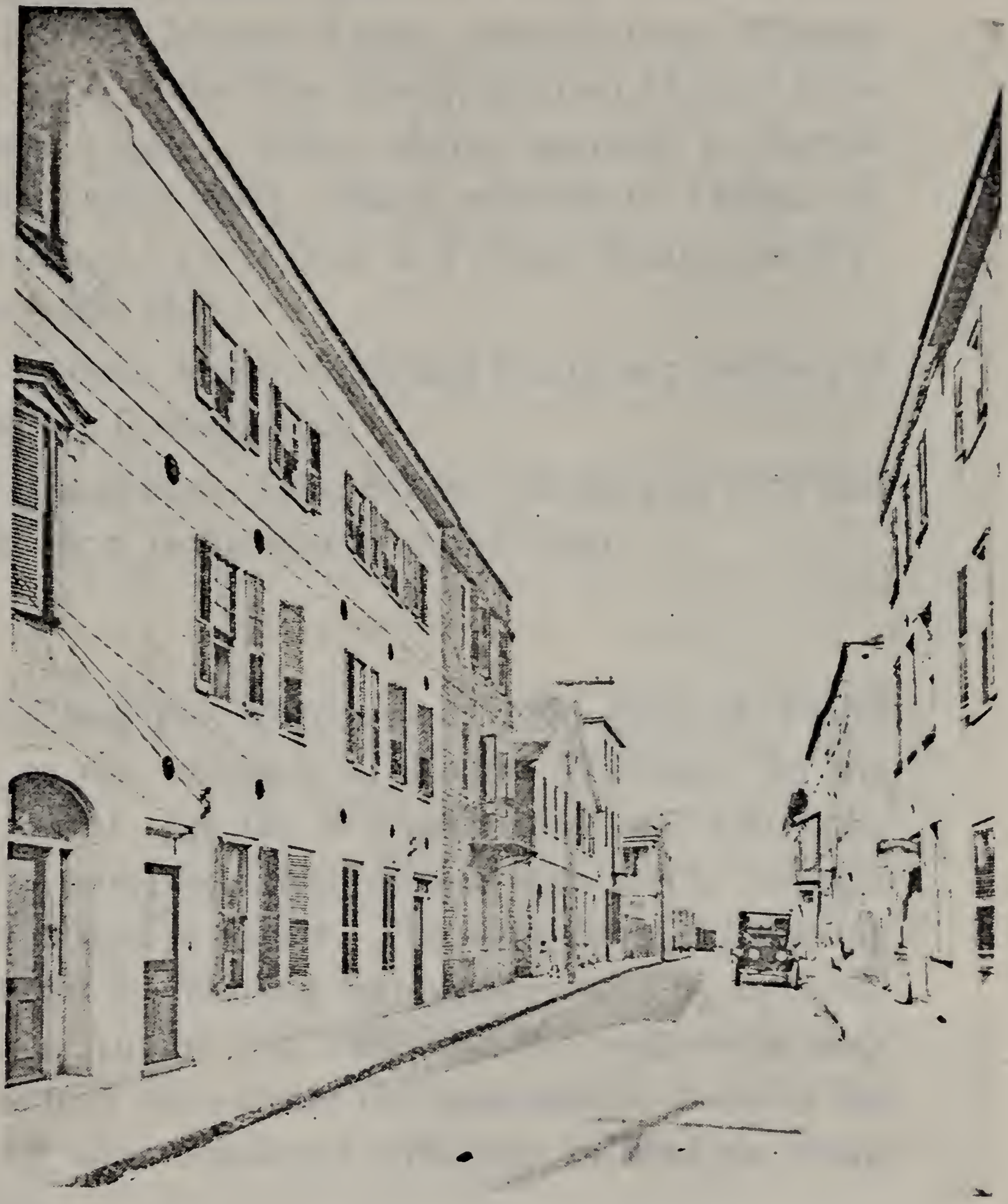
whom she had four children, William. Edward, and two daughters. Edward Jones went to England, and married there. The only remaining link with the Williams family rests with William Jones and his two sisters.

The estate was valued at 17,500 pounds sterling. His widow, Ann Roper Williams died in 1809, outliving her husband a little over one year.

The Williams genealogical tree can now be carried on in England through George Parker Williams, a surgeon, who died in 1846, leaving four sons and three daughters, and David Edward Williams, leaving one son and three daughters. Owing to the war and the difficulty of obtaining information, my desire to carry on the succession throughout the Eighteenth Century has been abandoned.

Grace Amelia Williams, daughter of Robert Williams, Jr. by his second wife, Ann Roper, was born on the 1st March, 1777 in Charleston, S. C., and was married to John Soady, of the Audit and Exchequer Offices in London on 6th September, 1810. She died in 1853. They had three sons: John Williams (1811-1900), Robert Williams (1813-1857) and Brooking (1818-1902).

My father, a barrister at law of Lincolns Inn, married Eliza, daughter of John Yorick Brookes, of Exeter, Devon, on June 8th, 1840. They had issue:



Robert Williams' Residence, 18 Tradd St., Charleston

Robert Francis, married Rebecca Winston (1842-1902); Agnes Rundle, married Philip Muntz (1843-1927); Grace Marion Roper, married Isaac Winston (1845-1928); John Wm. Soady, married Marie Louise Poleman (1846-); Eliza Maria, married to Burton Winston (1849-1928); Mary, married to Thomas B. Bell (1854-). I was born in Putney, Surrey, on September 19th, 1846.

My nephew, Robert Williams Soady, is a resident of Edgewood, Pennsylvania.

My grandfather, John Soady, was born in 1775 and died in 1872, in his ninety-seventh year.

* * *

The Charleston Directory of 1780 gives 18 Tradd Street as the residence of Robert Williams. In the great fire of 1740 the Williams house was destroyed, but was soon thereafter rebuilt with bricks brought from Holland in ballast. The same house exists today except that the building was badly injured by an earthquake on August 31st, 1886, and the walls were stuccoed to hide the cracks; the iron bolts in front of the building were connected with rods to hold the walls together.

* * *

My first Roper ancestor was William Roper, born in London about 1700. He came to this Country in 1721. His father had died some three years earlier, a mer-

chant of considerable means, owning the buildings he occupied on Cornhill.

Undoubtedly the most commanding position in the heart of the City of London is the Royal Exchange, bounded on the south by Cornhill, and on the north by Threadneedle Street and the Bank of England.

William Roper was the only survivor of a large family; he was about twenty-one years old when he came to Carolina. Some two years after the death of his father his mother was married again, much to his sorrow, to a man named Colson; he could not get along with his stepfather and decided to leave London and seek his fortune in one of the Colonies. His mother fully approved of his determination, and he lost no time in making arrangements to leave England. About that time a fine vessel was leaving for Charles Town; he engaged passage, and when the time arrived he bade his mother an affectionate farewell and left his native land forever.

It is interesting to note from the letter of Richard Dart Roper, and quoted throughout these memoirs that this Mr. Colson after dissipating all his wife's estate in the "South Sea Bubble," a gigantic speculation which involved the finances of the British Government and financial ruin to many thousands, finally died, and left his widow penniless. Later on, she came over to Carolina to her son, who, with the most filial affection furnished a house for her during her lifetime. "My

John Soady (1775-1872)

honored mother has often spoken of her as a most beautiful woman, which was confirmed by her picture which was in Cornhill house when I left it, with several other handsome portraits."

In the voyage across the Atlantic he had the good fortune to meet with a most agreeable companion on board the ship, to become his clerk, who was returning to Charles Town with a cargo of goods. I cannot remember the name of this worthy merchant, who became very much pleased with my grandfather, and engaged him while on board the ship to become his clerk on their arrival in Charles Town. He was one of the most respected merchants of the City. This worthy merchant had a sister, younger than himself who became deeply enamoured with her brother's clerk; her attachment must have been no less strong than it is reasonable to suppose his merit was great, as her brother made proposals of marriage between them, with an offer to take him into co-partnership. These highly flattering offers seem to have been declined.

A short time after he commenced business on his own account, when he married Miss Hutchinson; it is possible this marriage might have influenced him in declining the brilliant proposal of his friend, the merchant; this is, however, conjecture. Mr. John Hutchinson (Mrs. Roper's brother), died a bachelor, leaving his sister an ample estate. She had two beautiful children, one a daughter named Charlotte, who died a

well grown child, and a son, who died young. Their pictures and that of my grandfather's mother, and several other elegant family paintings, adorned the walls of Cornhill house. Since my marriage, and removal to John's Island they have all disappeared except my grandfather's picture, which I have suspended in your drawing-room.

Mrs. Roper did not long survive her lamented children. After showing every respect to the memory of his first wife, and continuing single for some time, he addressed and married Miss Grace Hext. Her grandfather, Hugh Hext, came with his family to the Province of Carolina from Froome, Somerset, in 1686. His fourth son, David Hext, was the father of Grace Hext. He married Ann Barnet who died in 1754. In his will he appointed his five living daughters, Martha McCall, Providence Prioleau, Grace Roper, Amelia Dart, and Elizabeth Hext, executors. He gave his wife all of his household goods, three negroes, his horse and riding chair, and the use of his house and lot wherein he then resided on the south side of Tradd Street, during her widowhood; the residence and lot to be sold by her executors after her death; one hundred pounds sterling to his daughter, Elizabeth Hext, and the remainder consolidated with the whole estate. The Tradd Street lot to be sold on the death or marriage of said Ann Hext, the proceeds turned in with the general estate and the whole, after paying just

Grace Amelia Soady
(*née* Williams)

[illegible]

[illegible]

debts, equally divided between five daughters of the testator. David Hext died in November 1769.

William Roper, by his second wife, had four children: William Roper, Martha, Ann and Thomas. William (2nd) married Hannah Dart on 5th May, 1771. Their children: Richard Dart Roper, Amelia, William Roper (3rd) and Benjamin Dart Roper.

Benjamin Dart Roper married Barbara Jenkins Feb. 26th, 1807. They had eight children: Benjamin, Jenkins, Mary, William (4th), Anne, Richard Roper, Thomas Roper and Julia. He died Nov. 20th, 1852.

Richard Roper was born on 23rd January, 1818, and married Ann Eliza Dent Feb. 18th, 1840. They had issue, eight children: Ann Elizabeth (1840-1845), Katherine Hubert Ann (1843-1896), Ann Evelyn (1846-1929)), Mary Anne (1848-1925), Benjamin Sandford (1851-1873), Joanna Caroline Cannon (1851-1913), John Hubert (1853-1917), Georgia Ophelia Ann (1857-1922).

William Roper died in 1881.

On leaving England William Roper gave all his patrimony to his mother. He brought over his portrait, painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller during the lifetime of his father; it is that of a lad seventeen or eighteen years of age. Sir Godfrey Kneller died in 1723 at the age of seventy-five; he had given up his atelier in Covent

Garden some years previously, and had retired to his country estate in Twickenham.

William Roper also brought over all his goods and chattels, designated as a shipload, consisting of furniture, glass and silverware.

I quote from the Will of Mrs. Mary Roper Wragg, who inherited from her father, Richard Roper, as follows:

> "The portrait of William Roper, brought over to this country by him in 1721, painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller, to be given to the Gibbes Art Gallery (17th Century Division). Two English silver goblets with the Roper crest, and two English silver salvers with the Roper crest to John H. Roper junior and Sandford Roper—these four pieces of silver to be left in trust to them by their uncle, John H. Constance Roper to take charge of this silver and give it to John and Sandford on their twenty first birthday."

Mrs. Wragg died in 1925, in her 76th year.

After the death of his first wife William Roper married Miss Grace Hext. Her grandfather, Hugh Hext, came with his family to the Province of Carolina from Froome, Somerset in 1686. His fourth son, David Hext, was the father of Grace Hext. He married Ann Barnet who died in December 1754. In his will he appointed his five living daughters, Martha McCall, Providence Prioleau, Grace Roper, Amelia Dart, and Elizabeth Hext, executors. He gave his wife all of his household goods, three negroes, his horse and riding chair, and the use of his house and lot

Robert Williams Soady (1813-1857)
(Barrister-at-Law)

wherein he then resided on the south side of Tradd Street during her widowhood, the residence and lot to be sold by her executors after her death, and one hundred pounds sterling given to his daughter, Elizabeth Hext, and the remainder consolidated with the whole estate. The Tradd Street lot to be sold at the death or marriage of said Ann Hext, the proceeds turned in with the general estate and the whole after paying debts, equally divided between said five daughters of the testator. David Hext died in November, 1769. His daughter, Elizabeth, was married to Robert Williams, Junior, in 1755. William Roper had six children; his fourth daughter, Ann Roper, was married to Robert Williams, Junior, in 1771.

William Roper, son of Colonel Roper, who left his Estate to build and endow the Roper Hospital in Charleston, went especially to England to trace his lineage to the William Roper of the Sixteenth Century, and he was able to prove beyond question his direct descent from Margaret, the daughter of Sir Thomas More.

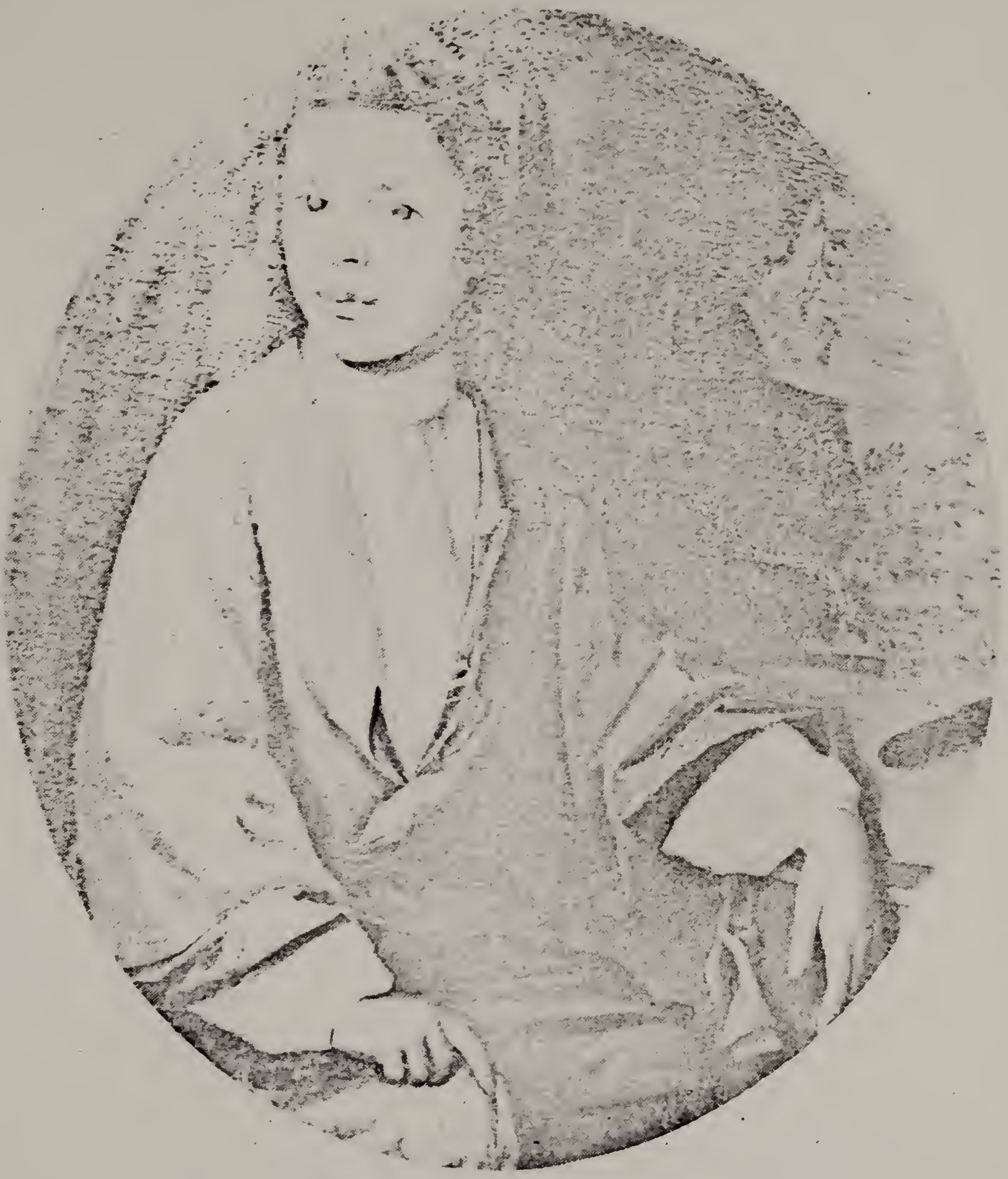
I quote from a very interesting biography of "Saint Thomas More," written by the Reverend Sir John R. O'Connell, M. A., Dublin, and published by Duckworth, London, in 1935.

"The most notable, as well as the oldest of the family, was More's eldest daughter, Margaret, who, when little more than sixteen years old, married William Roper, then twenty-two. It is to this "son Roper" that all lovers of Saint Thomas More are indebted for his intensely vivid and understanding life to account for his father-in-law's work, inspired by an admiration for More's virtues and genius, not less than gratitude to one whose example and gentle teaching and prayers brought him back to that faith that for a time he had lost.

"Thomas More induced Henry the Eighth, unwillingly, to accept his resignation of the Lord Chancellorship. The failure of More to give his approval of the King's marriage to Anne Boleyn, and to obtain from him a declaration of supremacy as Supreme head on earth of the Church of England as so defined. . . He was subsequently arrested for High Treason and committed to the Tower, and after fifteen months confinement was beheaded on Tower Hill on the 6th April, 1525. The canonization of Saint Thomas More, under the late Pope was hailed with equal satisfaction by men of all parties and shades of opinion."

William Roper had a large estate in Eltham, Kent, and in the Parish of Saint Dunstan in the City of Canterbury, in which parish church the Ropers were buried. There still exists the Roper Gate, though the mansion is there no longer.

The Ropers were of Norman descent and came over with William the Conqueror. The original name was Le Ropere. The earliest records I have of the Ropers are of Osbertus Le Ropere (1321) and John Ropere (1351).



William Roper, Born *ca.* 1700
(Painted in 1717, by Sir Godfrey Kneller)

In Burke's Peerage and Baronetage it is recorded (page 1475)—Roper-Curzon.—William Roper, Clerk of the King's Bench, married Margaret, daughter of Sir Thomas More, had two sons and three daughters. Margaret's dying request was that her father's head be put in her arms and they be buried together.

Roper crest: Three buck heads.

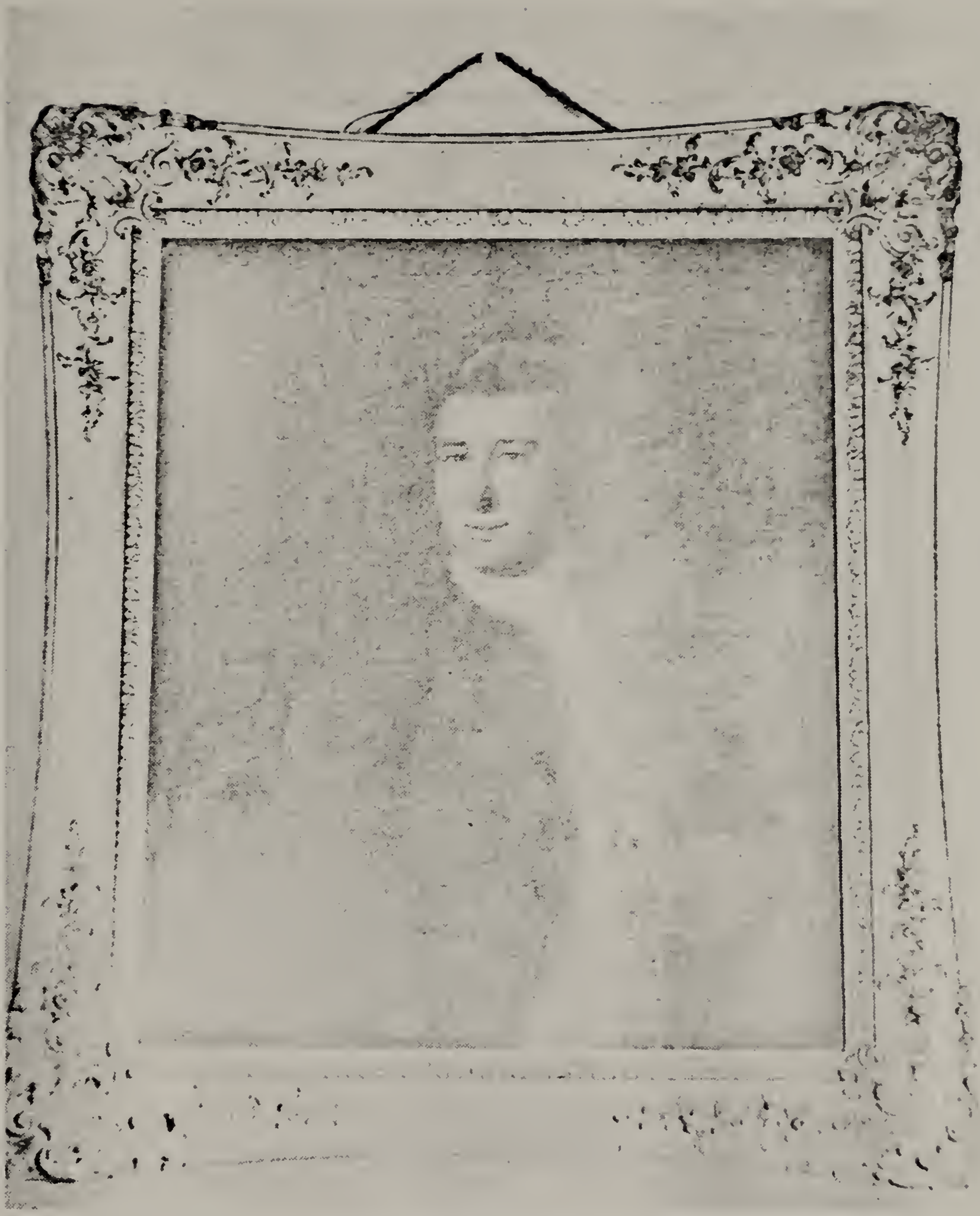
I quote from the letter of Richard Dart Roper:

"Grace Hext was the third daughter of my grandfather, Hugh Hext. He had five daughters, all of whom married during his lifetime. The eldest was named Providence, who married Samuel Prioleau, the next Martha, married John McCall, Grace, as above mentioned, married William Roper; the fourth, my maternal grandmother, Amelie, married Benjamin Dart, whose name I bear, the fifth, and youngest daughter, Elizabeth, married Robert Williams. To the best of my recollection was the name of a young Englishman, who arrived in Charleston in the happiest days of my grand-father, to carry on an extensive Mercantile business, this man had been his most intimate school fellow, when boys in England. Their intimacy was soon renewed, my grand-father in-cautiously became his security, to a very large amount. Coward failed, leaving my grand-father to pay his debts, to a large amount, it prayed upon his spirits deprived him of sleep, and almost of his senses, he could see but ruin staring him in the face. It distressed his family and friends. Happily, they roused him from this awful state of mind by representing to him that his credit was good. Cowards creditors disposed to be indulgent, and nothing was wanting but his renewed energies. These energies with his usual industry, were called into action, and in a few years the

debt was settled. On his death-bed he called my father to him, and enjoined him never to be security for any person but his Brother or Mother, and to hand down the injunction to his children, and to enjoin it upon their children.

"In obedience thereto, I avail myself of this opportunity of extending it to my children, with the expression of my wish of its extension to my latest posterity. This injunction has mainly saved my estate three times. In the course of my life, three times have I been called upon, and *Importuned by three of my friends as they called themselves,* to become their security, assuring me it was nothing but a form, that they would never allow me to suffer, etc. They all three failed, and to an amount either of which would have been my ruin. But I remembered my honoured grand-father's injunction. He lived to a good old age, leaving a very large estate to his children, with an unsullied name as ever adorned the Brow of an honest man.

"My worthy grandmother died a few years after the Revolutionary War. To pass over the memory of this respectable lady with no other notice than to say she was the daughter of Mr. Hext, or the wife of Mr. Roper, would not be doing justice to one who had filled so wide a space in her sphere of life, with so much honor to herself and food to others. Her piety and benevolence were as ample as her means of fulfilling every Christian charity. Her house was noted for having always under its shelter some indigent and worthy object of her sympathy and kindness. Her niece Miss Amantha Codner, (commonly called Binky), knew no difference between herself and her aunt's own daughters. She married Mr. William Elliott, a wealthy planter. In mentioning the name of Miss Sally Goode (whom I well remember), I am aware it is not connected with this family history, but as she was reared by my grandmother, and as there are several interesting incidents in her life, it might not be unworthy of record. When Charleston was besieged during the War she was invited to



Benjamin Dart Roper
(From Painting by Theus)

retire into the country with the family, but being engaged in some profitable needlework, and a school for small children, she concluded to remain in the city. During the siege she and a Mrs. Smith, the latter with an infant son, and some others were induced to go into the Barracks for shelter, where the Charleston College now stands. General Moultrie mentions in his memoirs, that, after the capitulation, he warned the British Officers who were going in and out of the barracks, and who were very careless snapping the guns that were in the barracks, that most of them were loaded with ball cartridges, which they disregarded; one of the guns they snapped went off and ignited a parcel of gunpowder, which blew up the barracks, killing several people, among them Mrs. Smith, but her child escaped. Miss Sally Goode had one of her legs so badly fractured it had to be amputated. She was removed, carrying with her in all her troubles Mrs. Smith's unfortunate child, whom she nurtured and in due season put out to a trade. He is now living and better known as John Smith, Clerk of St. Philip's Church. Miss Goode survived with the loss of her leg, and after the War resumed her school and sewing work, and by her industry and prudence purchased a small two-story house (and 9 or 10 negroes), in King Street, opposite Terpsichore Hall, where she died not many years ago. Many other acts of my grandmother's benevolent charities might be mentioned here, but a larger space has already been taken up than I intended, must therefore return to her own immediate family.

"I have already stated that my grandmother's oldest child was William (my father), who, after his return from England, married his first cousin, my honored and beloved mother, Hannah Dart, who had nine children. My sister, Amelis, (she married John Brailsford), my brother William, (he died single), and myself were the only three that grew up and survived our parents. Martha, my grandmother's second child, married John Somers, she died in childbed with her first child; her child died also.

"Ann, my grandmother's third child, married Robert Williams, being his second wife. But it will be in order to turn back to his first marriage with my great-grandfather's youngest daughter, Elizabeth Hext. I will first say a few words relative to Mr. Williams. He was born in England, of a respectable old family, had received a most finished collegiate education, and in every respect was a most accomplished gentleman, and the greatest Chamber Lawyer in the country. He had a much larger practice than he could accomplish, and gave his superfluous business to his son by his first marriage, by which he had five children, to-wit: Sarah, Robert, Margaret, Mary and Elizabeth. He and his wife lived with her father, Mr. Hext, until he died. Mr. Hext resided in the house he built at the north-east corner of Broad and Mazick Streets, now the residence of Mr. Alfred Huger; it was a two-story building with a Dutch roof. After it fell into the hands of Mr. Huger's father, he altered the roof as it now stands. I am thus particular as it might not be uninteresting, to state the following incident as to my great-grandfather, and his house. In the great hurricane of 1752 which inundated all the lowlands of Charleston, contiguous to Cooper and Ashley rivers, and overflowed many lots and washed away some houses. After the storm began to abate Mr. Hext opened a window to take a look out, when he saw an object come floating down the street which proved to be a feather-bed with a human being on it; unlike Noah's Dove, he took him in through the window. It was a Mr. Pendarvis, the only one of his family who was saved, his house having been swept away. Doctor Chambers, in his description of this terrible hurricane, mentions a schooner that drifted into Mr. Brewton's garden in King Street, (the same Mr. W. B. Pringle resides in now); it could never after be got off.

"Mrs. Williams, my great aunt, and daughter of Mr. Hext, must have died in the year 1770 or 1771, as Mr. Williams returned to

Richard Roper (1818-1881)
(From Painting by Colcrock)

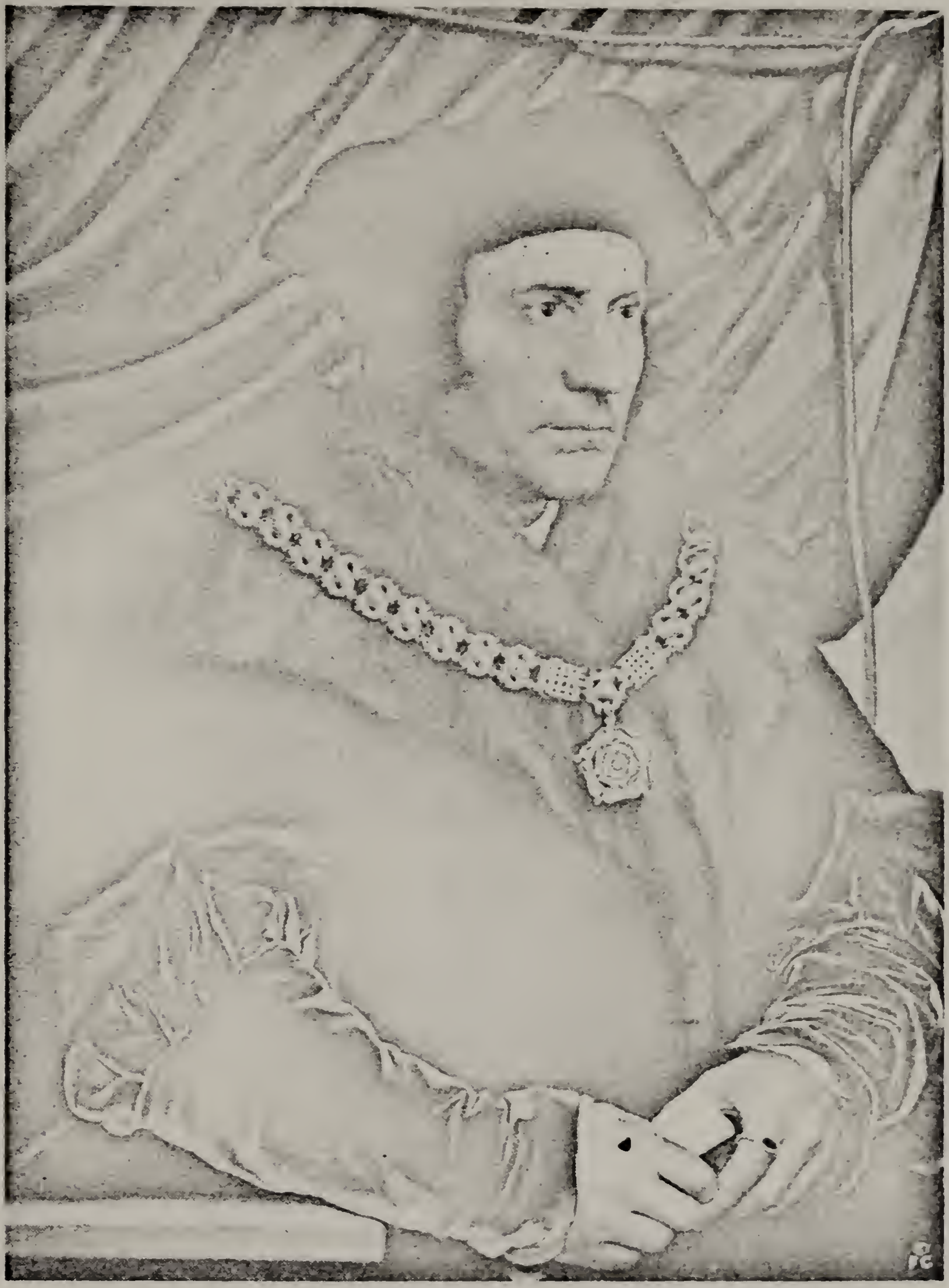
[illegible]

England shortly after her death, as I have been met with repeated evidences of his traveling in England with my father in 1772. On his return to Charleston he addressed Ann, my grandfather's third child, and married her. I have been told repeatedly that my father strenuously opposed this marriage, on the grounds that he stood in relation to his sister, her uncle; his opposition availed nothing. Mr. Williams insured his position at the bar, living with his wife, and his first wife's five children, and four children by the present wife, to-wit: Martha, William Roper, Grace, and Ann, eleven persons in all, as happy a family as was to be met with perhaps as any under the sun. But alas! the uncertainty of all earthly happiness. Most unfortunately for them, the Mother Country and her Colonies were in trouble, and soon at deadly war, and changed the cup of bliss into the deepest affliction. It was not long after the period that I am writing about, when Mr. Williams was called upon to take the oath of allegiance to the new government, which he excused himself from doing, alleging that he had been obliged to take that oath to the King, and to comply with the oath now demanded of him would be committing perjury. He assured the Civil Authorities that if he were permitted to remain in Carolina he would do nothing against the American Cause, and observe the strictest neutrality, but these assurances availed him nothing, he was peremptorily ordered to quit the country, he had no time to lose, a small vessel was to sail shortly for Nassau, New Providence, in which he engaged his passage, appointed Colonel Roper (his brother-in-law) to be his attorney.

"It was about this time, a gentleman called on my father, (his name I never heard) and warned him that that very night a mob had been engaged to break into Mrs. Williams' house for the purpose of dragging out young Mr. Williams into the street to disgrace him publicly. My father lost no time in sending him as privately as he could, to Cornhill, where he remained until the excitement blew over.

The mob accordingly did break into the house, and regardless of all decency and humanity, although told Mr. Williams was not in the house, searched every bed-chamber, terrifying unoffending helpless women and children. However, they missed their victim, the Bird had flown, and although the leader of this gallant mob had disguised himself by tying black crepe over his face, he could not disguise his person, his air and manner, which were too well known to Mrs. Williams and the elder daughters as being his brother-in-law.

"It appeared that young Mr. Williams was charged with having received a Lieutenant's Commission from the British Commander when in Charleston. This might have been done, but I am confident he never acted under it. A more unoffending young man never lived. I have never heard that either he or his father ever did a single act of hostility against the American Cause. If it was done I am a stranger to it, while a score of names of mature citizens might be mentioned who received Commissions, and even wore the British uniform. One of the most wealthy planters on one of our Sea Islands was a Colonel in the British Army, who made his plantation the British Headquarters. If ever his estate was confiscated it must have been returned to him and some others I could mention. I do not intend by this to defend or justify Mr. Williams; his family had not a relation or friend but surely lamented the part he took. He had married two Carolina ladies, had children by both. His lovely wife, her venerable mother, his ample estate, his high standing in his profession, these and other reasons, were powerful considerations to have induced him to a different course, most unfortunately, to his family, he decided otherwise. His only offence was an unwillingness to forswear his native country, or take up arms against it, never dreaming it would be subsided. There can be no doubt he had such enemies who left nothing undone to undo him, or render him unpopular, for what reason otherwise I cannot tell why he should be in every vulgar mouth. Not longer than the last 4th of July, one of



Sir Thomas More
(Holbein)
The Frick Collection

the Companies celebrating the day drank a toast as insulting as it was unjust to his memory. I can have no doubt not one of the Company knew anything to his injury. If the punishment inflicted on Mr. Williams was confined to himself, perhaps his friends would have no right to say a word, but it reached innocent people. Boy as I was at the time, I have not forgotten the aganizing separation of my dear aunt, and my estimable grandmother's family.

"It was, I think, early one Sunday afternoon, just after an early dinner, most of our family had assembled at my grandmother's house on East Bay, to bid my Aunt farewell, when the captain of the vessel arrived that was to take the family to England. It appeared as if death had entered into the parlor. To see a large family, old and young, bathed in tears, and when my poor Aunt was torn from the embrace of her mother, nothing but the pain of death could have been more aganizing. I think they have again met in happier regions, never more to separate.

"Colonel Roper, Mr. Williams' attorney, mentioned to me that Mr. Williams presented claims on the British Government for forty thousand pounds sterling, the amount of his property that was confiscated. The British Government granted him ten thousand pounds sterling, and after his death a further grant, the amount I have never heard, but it was sufficient for the support and maintenance of his widow, and to educate the younger children, and their support while they were under the age of twenty-one. She had several children after she went to England, when at their meals they mustered seventeen souls, and always required in winter two rooms with fireplaces to warm the family. Colonel Roper also mentioned to me that several handsome fees, to his knowledge, had been sent across the Atlantic to Mr. Williams for his legal opinion, and advice in lawsuits to be tried in our courts. This is strong evidence of his great law knowledge.

"The only names I can remember were George, (he was a

physician), Edward, who married a Jamaica lady, with a handsome estate, and Cornelius James. But my aunt had other children.

"Before the close of the Revolutionary War Colonel Roper was grown up, and joined the Militia, and he marched into the City with them when the British evacuated Charleston. Shortly afterwards he married Miss Lydia Harvey, an orphan young lady who resided in Beaufort with her uncle and guardian, Doctor Cuthbert. They had a very large and interesting family of children, of whom I shall take notice in due season. Their father, professionally, was a planter in St. Paul's Parish, on Stone Swamp, he filled several civil and military stations with no less benefit to the public than honor to himself. Repeatedly returned to the Legislature, and several times Intendant of the City of Charleston, and presiding officer over several Societies who will long cherish his memory. He was Colonel of the 29th Regiment of the Milita of Charleston, and always spoken of as 'Colonel Roper.' Unhappily most of his children died at an age most flattering to parental hope of their doing well and enlarging the sphere of the family happiness. The two eldest, Lydia and Grace, the first about fourteen years of age, and the other about twelve, died of country fever. A few years after their death he carried his family to England, on a visit to his sister, Mrs. Williams, where he remained a little over a year, when he returned home, with his eldest surviving daughter Elizabeth alarmingly sick, with a violent cold contracted in England, to use her mother's language, 'the big tear stood trembling in her eye.' The doting mother, soon, too soon, found her darling daughter in a confirmed consumption, which not long after ended in death. Never, perhaps, was any young lady more deeply and more justly mourned than my lamented cousin. Possessed of fine talents, had received a most liberal education, and of most aniable manners, had endeared her to all who knew her.

"In the ship 'Two Friends,' Captain McNeil, in which the family returned to Charleston, filled with passengers, she several times took observations of the ship, with that accuracy, that Captain McNeil

declared to them, that if any accident was to befall him, Miss Roper was fully capable of taking the ship into Charleston. He said she could 'Box the Compass' (in his sailor phrase) as well as he could. Her chaste morals, and exemplary piety, it is confidently believed in Abraham's Bosom, has safely piloted her into the realms of eternal happiness.

"Her eldest brother, Thomas studied medicine in this city under Dr. Benjamin Simons, but completed his education in England. He too returned home in bad health, and practiced his profession one or two years, with every prospect of success and distinction, highly extolled by his old friend Dr. Simons. Poor fellow! He did not long survive his lamented sister, but died in the Spring of life, equally regretted and mourned by his bereaved relations and numerous friends. The earth had scarcely settled around Elizabeth's grave when her sorrowing and broken-hearted mother was laid by her side, and a few short months following, the tomb was again opened to receive her adored son.

"Such is the inscrutable ways of Providence, and humble submission is the duty of all surviving relations.

"Colonel Roper lived some years after these heavy afflictions. On a visit to his youngest and only surviving child, some eight or ten years ago, he contracted a violent cold which in a few days ended a broken constitution.

"From a family of ten children, his son, Robert William Roper, was the only one who survived his family. About six or seven summers ago, he arrived in Charleston from his plantation, with country fever, of which he died in a few days, leaving a widow, and no child, as you were well acquainted with him and all the circumstances of his death, I need not dwell further on this mournful subject.

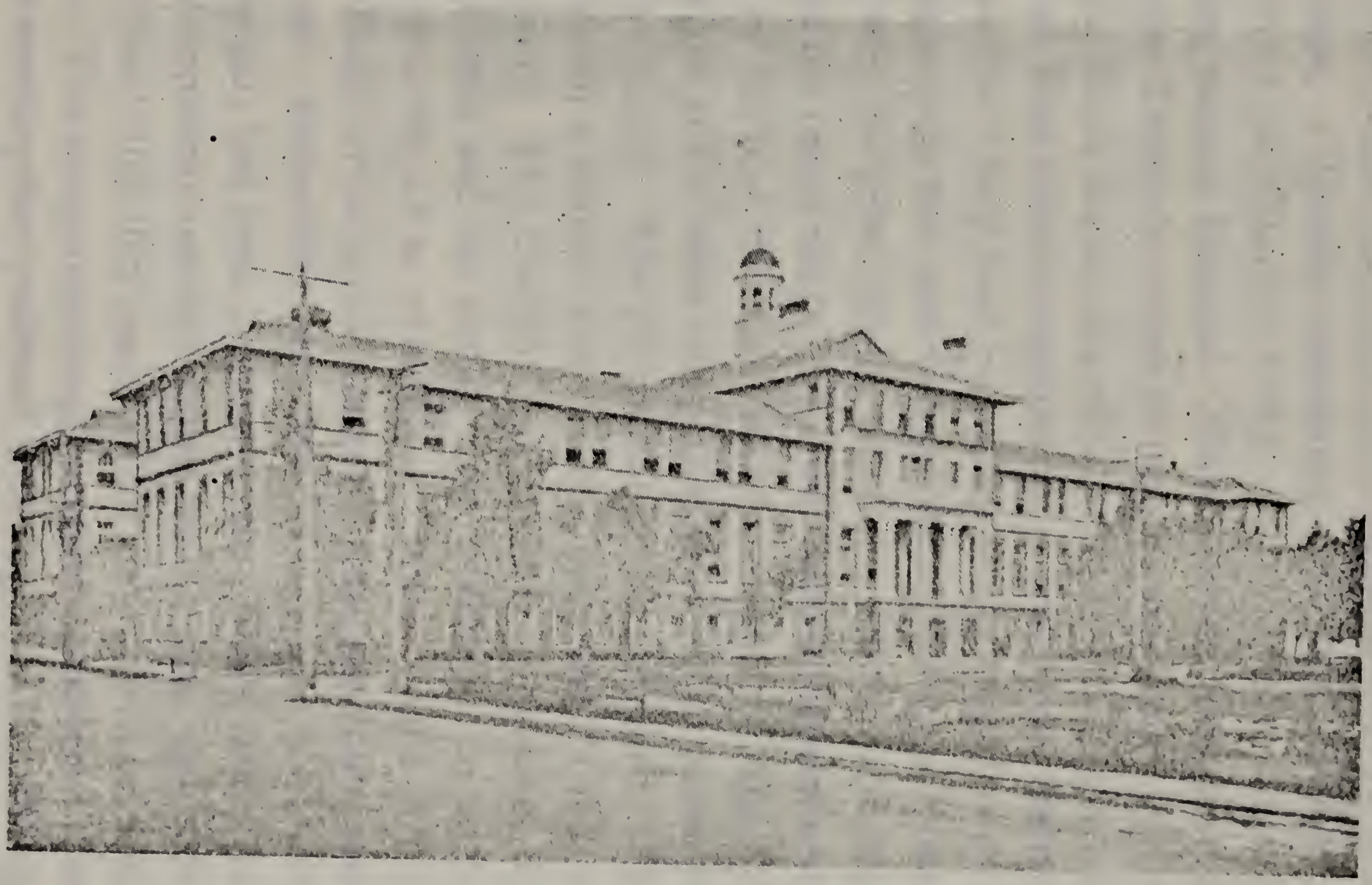
"A few years previous to his father's death, I understood him to say that his son William had undertaken to trace the Roper family to

their origin, and that they were of Norman descent, that they came over to England with William of Normandy, when he invaded England, that the name was originally Re Ropere and the maternal line was from an old family named Sir Thomas More.

"I have never seen the manuscript, or conversed with my cousin on the subject; the only family relic in my possession is an old mutilated arm°rial exactly similar to the coat-of-arms on my father's plate."

Thus Colonel Roper and his large family have become extinct. He left an ample estate, part of it at his son's disposal which he bequeathed to his widow, as his son left no heir. The bulk of it to found "The Roper Hospital" in Charleston, which bids fair to do much good, as well as to perpetuate his name.

The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine of July 1918 published the chart of the descents of the Wragg family of South Carolina. The first immigrants to South Carolina of the Wragg family were Samuel and Joseph Wragg, two brothers, in 1711. According to the family tradition they were the sons of a Mr. John Wragg of Chesterfield, Derbyshire. After the transfer of the Province to the Crown, Samuel Wragg was a member of the Council, as also was later his brother Joseph. The brothers carried on business in Charles Town, and had been merchants in London in connection with their uncle, William Wragg. They came to the Province well provided



Roper Hospital.—Destroyed by Earthquake in 1886 and Rebuilt

with capital, and when they died, left large fortunes. The two brothers married sisters, daughters of Jacques du Bosc, a French immigrant, who had become a merchant in Charles Town. In 1718 Mr. Samuel Wragg went to England. When outward bound from Charles Town the vessel he was on was taken by the pirate, Black Beard, just off Charles Town Bar; it was one of nine vessels captured in a few days. Shortly thereafter a long boat pulled up to the wharf with a message from the notorious pirate to Governor Johnston that his crew was in want of medicine and that unless the list of drugs forwarded was not immediately sent by his boat the heads of Mr. Samuel Wragg, his little son, and of some other citizens would be presented to the Council. The excitement can be imagined. The Governor, a fearless and resolute man, was furious at the insult. The Council was divided in opinion, but the friends and the family were unanimous in saying that the life of so valuable a citizen would not be sacrificed for so small a scruple; the medicine must be sent. Meanwhile poor Mr. Wragg and his fellow passengers had been in great terror; Black Beard had been impatient and had shown such a great desire for their heads that they trembled for good reason for their lives. The drugs appearing, the pirate plundered them of everything they possessed, securing from Mr. Wragg alone $6,000.00, in specie, and sent them ashore almost naked.

William Wragg, the eldest son of Samuel Wragg, was the William who, as a child, had been captured by Black Beard. He was a man of great ability and of the highest character. He was offered the post of Chief Justice of the Colony but declined it for motives of the greatest delicacy. William and his brother, for their services in bringing out large numbers of emigrants to the Province were granted twenty-four thousand acres of land; this estate was long known as the "Wragg Barony." But the Wraggs did not give up their business. William Wragg was a consistent Royalist, and was punished for his refusal to sign the Association's demands. First they allowed him to remain within the Barony, and then made him take ship for Amsterdam. The ship was wrecked on the Dutch coast and Mr. Wragg was drowned. A monument to his virtues and loyalty was erected to his memory in Westminster Abbey.

Samuel Wragg was the son of Dr. William Wragg and a direct descendant. He married Mary Anne Roper on October 27th, 1874, and died ten years later. Mrs. Wragg mentions in her will a gift received from a Miss A. T. Wragg; it is possible that she may have been a sister of Samuel Wragg.

I am informed that as far as is known the Wragg name has become extinct in this country.

APPENDIX

WILL OF ROBERT WILLIAMS, SENIOR

SOUTH CAROLINA

In the name of God Amen. I Robert Williams of Saint Pauls parish Colleton County in the province aforesaid, planter being by the blessing of Almighty God in health of body but perfectly in my senses, but having arriv'd to an advanc'd time of life and remembering my mortality do now make and publish my last will and Testament. I resign my soul to God, my Body I desire may be interrd in a decent manner, humbly hoping for a Glorious resurrection to eternal life through the meritorious satisfaction and prevailing intercession of my blessed saviour Jesus Christ, and the wordly estate wherewith God of his bounty and beneficeal after all and singular my lawful debts and funeral expenses are fully and ultimately paid and satisfied I do hereby give devise and bequeath in manner and form following: Imprimis I give and bequeath unto my dearly beloved wife Margaret Williams and her assigns forever all and singular my household and kitchen furniture and implements of household of every species and denomination on her Plantation call'd Hyde Park in Saint Pauls Parish aforesaide, also all my stock of horses, cattle, sheep, hoggs and other stock on the said plantation together with my riding chair and wearing apparel; in lieu, compensation bar extinguishment and final discharge of her dower. Thirds and other right Title and interest which she ever had, now hath or shall or may hereafter claim, challenge or demand of into or out of my estate real and personal in law and equity or otherwise howsoever. Item I give and bequeath unto my son Robt Williams and his assigns forever my mulatto fellow named Billey and his wife Nanny with their two children Cate and Belle and their future issue and increase being according to my estimation worth the sum of two thousand

pounds lawful current money of the said Province. Item I give and devise unto my grandson R. W. Powells and his heirs and assigns forever my lot of land in the Town of Beaufort in Granville County in this province known in the plan thereof by the number three hundred and eight with the appurtenances. Item I give and devise unto my grand son Robert Williams and his heirs and assigns forever my other lot in the said Town of Beaufort known in the plan thereof by the number three hundred and eight with the appurtenances. Item I give and devise unto my grand daughter Elizabeth Grace Williams and her heirs and assigns forever my other lott of land in the said Town of Beaufort known in the plan thereof by the number of one hundred and sixty four with the appurtenances. Item I give and devise unto my Great Grand daughter Margaret Hartly and her heirs and assigns forever my other lott of land in the said Town of Beaufort known in the plan thereof by the number two hundred and thirty seven with the appurtenances. Item I give and bequeath unto my Great grandson James Hartly my silver watch and appurtenances. Item I do hereby authorize impower and direct my executors hereinafter nam'd or such of them as do and shall qualify and take upon him or them the burden of the execution of this my will and the survivor of him his Exors or Admors as soon as the same may or can be conveniently done after my decease to grant bargain and sell at Public or private sale for the most money that can be gotten therefore on credit of one two or more years, the Purchaser or purchasers thereof paying interest and giving security to the satisfaction of my said Excors. Item All and singular my remaining lands, plantations, negro and other slaves, goods and chattels, whatsoever and wheresoever in such suitable parts parcels and proportions as he or they shall think proper: and to make and execute good and sufficient Titles and conveyances unto the purchaser or purchasers thereof in Fee simple or otherwise, as the nature, circumstances or exigence of the case may require: and monies arising from uses sale

1727515

and disposal together with all and singular such other sum and sums of money which shall at the time of my decease be sued, owing, payable or belonging to me in any wise howsoever and compose the rest, surplus and residue of my estate I do hereby give and bequeath in manner and form following that is to say As for and concerning three thousand pounds lawful current money of the said Province, part and parcel thereof I do give and bequeath the same unto my said Executors, In trust that they or such of them as shall qualify and take upon him or them the burden of execution of this my will and the survivor of them his Exors or Admors do and shall immediately after my decease, place and keep the said sum of three thousand pounds out at interest in the province for and during the natural life of my Daughter Mary Powell the wife of James Edward Powell of Savannah in the province of Georgia Esquire and yearly and every year pay unto her my said daughter during the said term the yearly interest and profits of the said sum of money after all legal deductions for her own separate use and benefit without the interposition or controul of her said husband: and it is my will that her receipt distinct from her said husband notwithstanding her coverture shall be a sufficient discharge and acquittance to my said executors from to time for the same and after the decease of my said daughter the said Mary Powell upon this further trust that my said executors or some of them do and shall pay and apply two thousand pounds part of the said three thousand pounds unto the children or grand children of the said Mary Powell in such parts, shares, and Proportions for such terms and estates and in such way manner and form as she the said Mary Powell whether she be sole or Covert by and instrument in writing under her hand attested by two or more credible witnesses, or by any writing purporting to be her last will and Testament so attested, shall give, bequeath, limit or appoint the same: and on failure of any disposition thereof by the said Mary Powell them in Trust and to for the use, Benefit, and Behoof of her said children

and Grand children agreeable to the Statue of Distributions: and the remaining sum of one thousand Pounds part of the said three thousand pounds, it is my will shall on the decease of the said Mary Powell sink into and become part and parcel of the remaining of the said, rest, surplus, and residue of my said Estate which I do hereby give and bequeath unto and among all and singular the children of my said Daughter Mary Powell and of my said son Robert Williams who shall be living at the time of my decease and my Great Grand Children James Hartly and Margaret Hartly to be divided between them as tenants in common in such way and manner that my said Great grand children shall take only a child's part of share thereof between them in right of their mother whom they represent: and Plan'd out at interest and improv'd to and for their utmost benefit and advantage severally and respectively until they severally and respectively are entitled to receive the same by law. Lastly I do hereby nominate and appoint my said son Robt Williams and my Grand son Robert Wm. Powell Exors of this my last will and Testament revoking by these present all former and other wills by me at any time heretofore made and declaring this only to be my last will and Testament contained on this and the two preceding pages of one sheet of paper. In Witness whereof I the said Robt Williams have to this my last will and Testament set my hand and seal this third day of October in the year of our Lord 1771 and in the 11th year of his Majestys reign.

Robert Williams (L.S.)

Signed, sealed published and declared by the above named Robert Williams as and for his last will and Testament in the presence of us who in his sight and in the sight of each other have at this request subscribed our names as witnesses.

4964